

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2486

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 0019

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PL, CZ, HU, PFOR

SUBJ: GLORIA TRANSMITTER PROBLEM

REF: (A) ARMITAGE LETTER TO AMBASSADOR OF DECEMBER 11, 1974;

(B) STATE 000287

1. WE BELIEVE RFE USE OF VOA GREENVILLE TRANSMITTERS WOULD DAMAGE PRESENT GOH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VOA AS AN INDEPENDENT, CREDIBLE VOICE OF THE USG REPORTING ON WORLD EVENTS, THE UNITED STATES, AND ON USG POSITIONS ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES BY GIVING IT CLOSER ASSOCIATION WITH RFE WHICH, WHILE NOT JAMMED IN HUNGARY, IS OBJECTED TO.

2. WHILE VOA AND RFE MAY STILL BE CONFUSED OCCASIONALLY IN HUNGARY, GOH RECOGNIZES A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO. THIS HAS BEEN MADE CLEAR ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS RECENTLY WHEN HUNGARIAN OFFICIALS WOULD OBJECT TO EMBASSY OFFICERS ABOUT THE PURPOSES OF RFE WHILE STATING THAT VOA IS AN ACCEPTABLE, LEGITIMATE AND RECOGNIZED VOICE OF THE USG.

3. THIS RECOGNITION IS UNDERLINED BY FACT THAT WHILE NO RFE STAFFER HAS EVER BEEN ISSUED A HUNGARIAN VISA, VOA NEWSMEN OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICE AND EVEN ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS IN PAST THOSE OF THE HUNGARIAN SERVICE, HAVE BEEN GRANTED VISAS, AND THEIR WORK HAS BEEN FACILITATED IN A MANNER SIMILAR TO THAT OF OTHER FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS.

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4. USE OF THE SAME TRANSMITTER, EVEN WITH DIFFERENT FREQUENCIES, WOULD QUICKLY BECOME KNOWN TO GOH AND WOULD TEND TO IDENTIFY RFE COMMENTARY ON HUNGARIAN INTERNAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AS THE OFFICIAL POLICY OF USG. WE THINK THE CAREFULLY MAINTAINED DISTANCE OF THIS USEFUL RADIO INSTRUMENT FROM THE OFFICIAL RADIO HAS BEEN WELL CONCEIVED. CLOSER ASSOCIATION OF THE TWO COULD CAUSE US NEW DIFFICULTIES WITH GOH ABOUT BOTH OF THEM.

5. EMBASSY WOULD THEREFORE MUCH PREFER EXTENDED LOSS OF RFE TRANSMITTING CAPABILITY INTO HUNGARY TO USE OF THE SAME TRANSMITTER. WHILE SUCH DECISION MIGHT APPEAR TO BE A TECHNICAL ONE, IT IN FACT WOULD PSYCHOLOGICALLY BE A CRITICAL ONE. VOA ACCEPTIBILITY WOULD BE DAMAGED IN HUNGARY BY AN ASSOCIATION WITH RFE WHICH IS TOO CLEAR TO BE IGNORED; AND RFE COMMENTARIES WHICH GOH CAN TOLERATE AS LONG AS DISTANCE IS KEPT FROM USG WOULD BECOME MORE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE USG IN GOH EYES. THIS WOULD CREATE AN INCREASED POINT OF FRICTION IN INFORMATIONAL-CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH GOH AT TIME WHEN WE ARE SEEKING TO EXPAND OUR CONTACTS.

6. EXACTLY WHAT GOH WOULD DO IN RESPONSE TO SUCH SITUATION IS MORE DIFFICULT TO SAY, BUT WE WOULD ASSESS THE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AS BEING SUFFICIENTLY LARGE TO OPT FOR AN EXTENDED LOSS OF RFE SIGNAL POWER IF THAT PROVES NECESSARY.
PEDERSEN

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